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QUESTION OF EAST TIMOR

Letter dated 26 June 1992 from the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a statement on East Timor made by the spokesman of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Portugal at Lisbon on 23 June 1992 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under item 103 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Fernando REINO
Ambassador of Portugal
Permanent Representative
to the United Nations

* A/47/50.

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ANNEX

Statement on East Timor made by the spokesman of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Portugal at Lisbon on 23 June 1992

Recent sentences against East Timorese civilians strike again an ominous contrast with the leniency shown towards the Indonesian military brought to trial for their involvement in the 12 November massacre.

Two more East Timorese civilians, whose trials in Dili have now finished, have been given heavy prison sentences for non-violent activities in connection with the massacre committed on 12 November 1991 by the Indonesian military in the capital of the Non-Self-Governing Territory of East Timor, illegally occupied by Indonesia.

Juvêncio de Jesus Martins and Felismino da Silva Pereira were condemned to six years and five years and eight months in prison, respectively, for their alleged participation in organizing the demonstration that was, on that occasion, barbarously repressed by Indonesian troops, causing heavy human losses, as was widely reported. In the meantime, and according to what has been publicly disclosed, several low-ranking Indonesian military (two second-lieutenants, one sergeant and three privates - these three, curiously enough, were all of East Timorese origin) were court-martialled and given sentences of between eight and eighteen months imprisonment.

The charges brought against them (disobeying orders and inflicting wounds with a bayonet) are clear indicators that a serious investigation into those actually responsible for an atrocity that prompted world-wide indignation is still far from sight. Who ordered the shooting at the Santa Cruz cemetery? Who are those accountable for so many killed and wounded? These questions remain unanswered in spite of all the promises subsequently made by the Indonesian authorities.

Indonesia committed itself to identifying and punishing all those deemed responsible for that tragedy. So far, its understanding of that commitment has led it to inflict heavy penalties such as those referred to above upon East Timorese, indicted not for any violent activities, but for organizing peaceful demonstrations. There is a shocking and unacceptable discrepancy between these penalties and those imposed on the military (small fry as they may be) who took part in that terrible brutality.

Indonesia continues to blatantly disregard the commitments it gave in subscribing to the consensus agreed upon by the Commission on Human Rights, as announced by the declaration of its Chairman, on 4 March 1992.

Not only has the punishment of the authors of that carnage been translated into ludicrous measures: those civilians, whose release without delay was requested by the Commission on Human Rights, have been sentenced.

This shows that the Indonesian Government acted with complete cynicism in the Commission on Human Rights dealings with this issue. It also shows Indonesia's contempt for human rights.

Portugal expresses its firmest condemnation of these actions and hopes that the international community will draw from them the appropriate conclusions. Portugal affirms also its full solidarity with all those East Timorese who have been sentenced to unjust and illegitimate penalties aimed at repressing their struggle to ensure that the people of East Timor have the freedom to choose their political future.